

# **ADA Test Accommodations Guidelines for CASp Examination Registrants**

The Division of the State Architect (DSA) encourages Certified Access Specialist program (CASp) applicants with disabilities interested in obtaining an exam accommodation to timely submit the required information. All requests for accommodations will be taken seriously, and all efforts will be made to provide the applicant with a suitable reasonable accommodation. All information regarding requests for accommodation will be treated confidentially in compliance with state and federal law.

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**

State and federal law define a disability as a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more of an individual's major life activities. In compliance with the protections set forth in state and federal law, DSA will provide reasonable and necessary test accommodations to the voluntary Certified Access Specialist program's applicants with documented, qualifying disabilities. The purpose of test accommodations is to provide equal access to the voluntary Certified Access Specialist program examination and certification.

## **General Procedures**

All requests for accommodation of a disability must be made by completing the **Questionnaire for Candidates Requesting Test Accommodations**, (Form DSA-603) and submitting it, along with documentation from a qualified professional, to DSA by the exam registration deadline. Applicants must submit appropriate documentation no later than the exam registration deadline. To avoid unnecessary delays, DSA encourages applicants to submit requests for accommodation and supporting information prior to the registration deadline. Please note that a prior history of accommodation, without demonstration of a current need, will not necessarily warrant approval of testing modifications. If an applicant has been provided with an accommodation by DSA within the last year, they need not provide a new doctor verification note, nor complete the Questionnaire for Candidates Requesting Test Accommodations form (DSA-603). Additionally, a medical provider's verification will be valid if it was issued within the calendar year preceding the exam date.

Upon receipt of the requisite documentation, DSA staff will assess the request to determine if the applicant has a disability that will interfere with the applicant's ability to test under standard conditions. Exam modifications which fundamentally alter the nature or security of the exam are not permitted.

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## Documentation Guidelines

The following guidelines describe the necessary components of acceptable evidence required to establish a qualifying disability and the applicant's current need for testing accommodations. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit documentation that complies with these guidelines.

**Provide a personal statement:** As directed in **Questionnaire for Candidates Requesting Test Accommodations**, (Form DSA-603) applicants must attach a personal written statement (typed or handwritten) that describes their disability and how it impacts their ability to take the Certified Access Specialist examination under regular testing conditions. Applicants may add any additional information that they wish DSA to consider when making its determination.

**Evaluator must be qualified:** Clinical evaluations must be performed by a qualified professional. A qualified professional is defined as a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other health care provider, who has comprehensive training appropriate to diagnose an applicant's disability consistent with the provisions of the ADA. Details about the evaluator's professional credentials and area(s) of specialization, including certification/licensure, must be provided.

**ALL EVALUATOR REPORTS MUST BE ON PROFESSIONAL LETTERHEAD, TYPED, DATED, SIGNED AND OTHERWISE LEGIBLE.**

**Documentation must be current:** The granting of reasonable test accommodations is based on assessment of the *current* impact of the applicant's disability on the testing activity. Since the manifestations of a disability may vary over time and in different settings, professional reports must be based on an evaluation that is no more than one (1) year old and which reflect the applicant's current condition.

**The evaluator must state a diagnosis:** The evaluator must state a diagnosis, define the nature and severity of the disability, and explain how the disability affects the applicant's ability to take the Certified Access Specialist examination.

**Describe the applicant's functional limitations:** State and federal law define a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental condition that limits one or more major life activities as compared to most people. Any report submitted in support of an applicant's request for accommodation in testing must describe the applicant's functional limitations due to the diagnosed disability and how such limitations will substantially limit the individual's ability to take the Certified Access Specialist examination under regular testing conditions.

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**Recommended specific test accommodations:** Supporting documentation must describe (1) the recommended test accommodations and/or assistive devices, (2) why each accommodation or device is needed, and (3) how it will reduce the impact of the identified functional limitations. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to: additional testing time, assistive devices, audiotape examination materials, large print materials, a reader or scribe.

## **Reservations**

DSA reserves the right to require applicants to provide additional information to verify the existence of a disability and the need for testing accommodations. DSA will not delay the examination pending submission of any missing documentation.

In addition, DSA reserves the right to require a second opinion. If, in DSA's judgment, it is not clear whether the candidate has a qualifying disability or whether the requested accommodation is necessary, DSA may seek the opinion of an outside expert.

## **Decision to Grant or Deny Requested Accommodation**

Upon completing the review of the documentation and, if applicable, receiving the opinions of an outside expert, DSA will notify the candidate in writing of its decision regarding the requested accommodation and the basis for the decision.

## **Appeals Process**

An applicant's appeal of a decision denying in whole or part a request for accommodation must be in the form of a signed or otherwise verified request setting forth the following:

1. Applicant's name
2. Date of request
3. The nature of their appeal itself, and
4. The facts relied upon in support of the appeal

The appeal may be accompanied by any further documentation not previously provided which the applicant wishes DSA to consider in making a decision on their appeal. The appeal must be postmarked no later than seven (7) days after the applicant receives notification of the denial.